
Poetry
FROM
Instructions



Guy Bennett, *et al*

This sampling from *Poetry from Instructions** contains the following poems:

- Andrea Inglese, *Sans titre* (Instruction 65)
- Ian Monk, *Untitled* (Instruction 25)
- Judah Abendsonne, *Nachmittags Vogelschweigen* (Instruction 48)
- Sarah Haufrect, *Untitled* (Instruction 10)
- Deborah Meadows, *Untitled* (Instruction 37)
- François Le Lionnais, *Dix minutes de vacances* (Instruction 17)
- Keith & Rosmarie Waldrop, *Untitled* (Instruction 91)
- Hervé Le Tellier, *Villanoum* (Instruction 87)
- Philippe Annocque, *Sans titre* (Instruction 58)
- Susan Wheeler, *Untitled* (Instruction 76)

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Queries? Compliments? Complaints? Address them to [Guy Bennett](#).

* *Poetry from Instructions* is a work of generative poetry inspired by the instruction-based music and art of the mid-20th century, in particular the *Wall Drawings* of Sol LeWitt. The instructions from which the present poems were written appear in red, between the title and the name of the author.

65 : *Un poème incrédule.*

◆ *Andrea Inglese*

Ce n'est pas vrai !
C'est impossible !
Il n'est pas mort ?
Il mange des fraises ?

C'est improbable !
C'est sûrement faux !
Il respire encore ?
Il fait des blagues assis ?

Tu te trompes !
Tu déliras !
Il bouge ses paupières ?
Il rigole tout seul ?

C'est n'importe quoi !
C'est totalement absurde !
Il me vise avec son arme ?
Il est prêt à appuyer sur la gâchette ?

UNTITLED

25: A 100-line poem in which the words "peony," "nightingale" and "firefly" appear only once.

◆ Ian Monk

The words peony, nightingale and firefly
will appear only once in this poem
despite its focus on several promising themes
such as the varieties of herbaceous perennials
which include this flower among others
for example mint and potatoes
surprisingly combining in this way
the uselessness of beauty and dinner
or else ferns and grasses forming
the lawn you sit in front of having
a well-earned drink before your
meat and potatoes, carrots and peas
covered by succulent home-made gravy
followed perhaps by apple pie and cream
all washed down by a rather tannin-
steeped bottle of Côtes du Rhone red
first and then white with the dessert
before being rounded off by a cup
of the most excellent Italian espresso
and why not while we're at it
a generous shot of a good grappa
though eschewing the once inevitable
cigar which you find quite frankly
baffling and have never known
how to smoke finding the urge
to inhale practically impossible to resist
and so failing to see the point of it all
compared quite simply to a cigarette

anyway where were we oh yes
finishing dinner and staring once more
out of the window this time across
the now barely visible lawn glistening
slightly in the moon- and starlight
it's just the sort of evening which
seems to invite the writing of an ode
or some such romantic form
the kind of thing poets like Keats
wrote during Autumn or when
gazing at the patterns sculpted
on a Grecian urn or else at times
of indolence just like this slightly
alcoholised moment on a spring evening
which incites a vague feeling of
melancholy despite all the clichés
concerning this particular season
of the year especially in the city
of Paris where this season is put
on a distinctly undeserved pedestal
let's go for the psyche then especially
in the absence of any birdsong for
example which, if there were any,
would be drowned out by the constant
hum of the cars as well as
the clanging of the passing trams
and so what is my psyche or
in other words the totality of my
conscious and unconscious mind
doing right now? nothing much
apparently although that inner
voice of course never shuts up
for a single second spouting as
it does any amount of bullshit
when it doesn't have anything
concrete to bite on so to speak

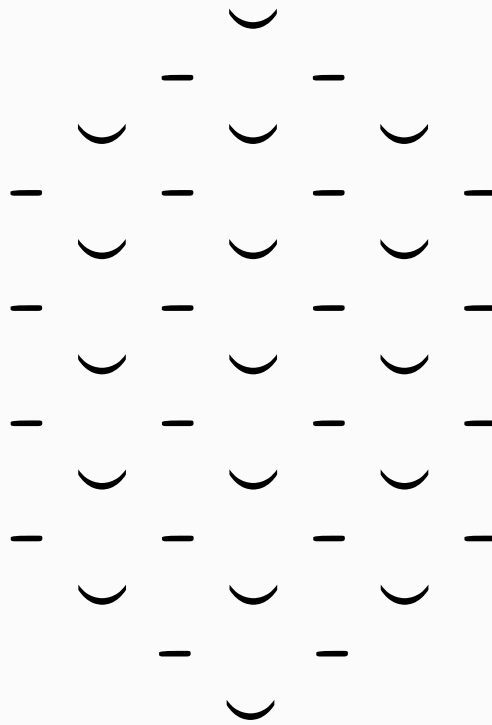
or to fall onto to put it another way
that voice which starts up according
to research around the age of six
and then never stops until you
croak (and maybe not even then
who knows? well, we all will
find out some day sooner or later)
while younger kids and animals
spend large amounts of time
thinking quite literally about nothing
just like any random insect crawling
across the floor that ant there
for instance, or outside, adding
to the moon- and starlight
but above all urban glow, the slight
glimmer of some beast or other
lightning bugs maybe, after all
you're no entomologist far from it
but one thing you do know is that
these lighting effects are not there
to look pretty nature has no objective
use for such a thing as aesthetics
but instead are what is called
an "honest warning signal" like
the bright red colour of the granular
poison frog to warn predators
that the beast in question is either
venomous or quite simply disgusting
even for the hardest of palates possessed
by all those ravenous creatures out there
and so the evening dims into night,
time for languishing before the non-ending
of a cancelled series on TV maybe
or else the actual end of something
so confusing that it lost you long ago
as thoroughly as it did its protagonists

NACHMITTAGS VOGELSCHWEIGEN

48: A poem in which the speaker doesn't speak.

📖 Judah Abendsonne

Nach Christian Morgenstern



UNTITLED

10: A poem embodying cognitive dissonance.

◆ Sarah Haufrect

In the dream from which I awaken
My head splits itself into strangers

One will sit and feast while the other forges ahead
The treacherous moat of day will wait for us both

One will search the empty shelves the other filled with multitudes
Teach what little there is to know to the other who knows already

Then darkness comes of course because my darkness is an open
Window one can see right through and the other cannot escape

If one would wait a thousand years to see the other
Then they might finally never see each other again

I hold my head and it holds me back
Together we face the day awakened

UNTITLED

37: *Plans for a poem.*

◆ *Deborah Meadows*

Out of hibernation, rabbit brush (common name: Chamisa) now formed a yellow-lined road against blue sky at this altitude, our altitude. It marks opening of the school year, but not all are ready to let go of summer, descend from mountains. Were this in the haiku tradition, all would know the reference to season, that the rabbit brush bloom and opening of the school year coincide. So, it could be reduced to:

Rabbit brush: yellow
road against blue altitude;
summer's end, descend.

DIX MINUTES DE VACANCES

17 : Un poème qui cherche à donner l'impression de la couleur jaune.

❖ *François Le Lionnais*

Vers le milieu des vacances je pense au jaune

L'instant où le jaune apparut dans l'univers
La quantité totale de jaune contenue dans l'espace
(Cas particulier : à l'intérieur de mon corps)
Le jaune et certains nombres remarquables
Le jaune et les bronzes Chang
Le jaune et quelques boulons dépareillés
Le jaune et le problème de l'existence du néant
Le jaune et l'attaque des pions perdants
Le jaune au-dessous du Zéro absolu
Le jaune : internationalisme ou cosmopolitisme ?
Le jaune et le renouvellement du roman policier
Le jaune et les sensations viscérales
Le jaune et elle
Le jaune du point de vue de Sirius
Le jaune d'un point de vue plus humain
Le jaune dans du jaune.

Un peu de repos

Et je me penche sur une autre question.*

* Ce poème anticipa son instruction.

Écrit 1953

UNTITLED

91: An alt-palindromic poem (i.e. comprising metric / phonic / syllable-count palindromes).

❖ *Keith & Rosmarie Waldrop*

out in the open shattering
it's easy enough
to move
the threads until the
threads move
enough to it's
easy
shattering in
the open
out

VILLANOUM

87 : Un hybride pantoum-villanelle.

❖ *Hervé Le Tellier*

Villanelle

1 2 3
4 5 1
6 7 3
8 9 1
10 12 3
11 13 1 3

Le pantoum tournoie sur lui-même
Tout comme fait la villanelle
C'est peut-être cela que j'aime

Tout comme fait la villanelle
Vole vole la ritournelle
Le pantoum tournoie sur lui-même

Pantoum

1 2 3 4
2 5 4 6
5 7 6 8
7 9 8 10
9 11 10 1

Vole vole la ritournelle
Et toi, toi, à mes yeux si belle
C'est peut-être cela que j'aime

Et toi, toi, à mes yeux si belle
La vie est une balancelle
Le pantoum tournoie sur lui-même

Hybride (il y a d'autres choix)

1 2 3
2 5 1
5 6 3
6 7 1
7 8 3
8 9 3 1

La vie est une balancelle
On rêve d'amour éternelle
C'est peut-être cela que j'aime

On rêve d'amour éternelle
Ce n'est jamais qu'une étincelle
C'est peut-être cela que j'aime

Le pantoum tournoie sur lui-même

SANS TITRE

58 : Un poème alternant pléonasmes et oxymores.

◆ *Philippe Annocque*

Cette page blanche d'écriture
sera-t-elle ce poétique poème
où je m'évertue en dilettante
à alterner par roulement
oxymores pléonastiques
et pléonasmes redondants ?

THE DEEP STATE

76: *An incomplete poem.*

◆ Susan Wheeler

Bev calls.

 The hounds are at it when –
circling their siblings in the silver pen –
I've got what she said on my mind again.

The detector dangles its battery pin
as I come down the ladder to settle in.
I can hear the hounds' terrible din

as Bev coughs, followed by a slurping sound.
